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WASHINGTON POST
25 June 1984

Soviets Using Terrorism, Shultz Asserts

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Secretary of State George P. Shultz yesterday accused the Soviet Union of using international terrorism as a political weapon and warned that democratic countries must be ready to take preemptive action to prevent terrorists from striking.

In his toughest speech yet on what has become a recurrent theme in recent months, Shultz called on democratic nations to join against what he called an international "League of Terror." He suggested that they share intelligence-gathering and quick-reaction efforts, but did not spell out what kind of preemptive action he had in mind.

Former Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, in a speech to the same conference on

terrorism at which Shultz spoke, proposed a new international organization "of governments that accept the principle of fighting terrorism." It would be headed by a high U.S. official, he said, and would "not exclude a combined operation by the member states" in combating terrorism.

There was no explicit link between Shultz's remarks and Rabin's proposal. Rabin said the functions of the new body would be to conduct intelligence and counterintelligence activity, create "effective defenses and preventive measures" against terrorism and to provide aid and "coordinated political activity against countries that initiate or assist" terrorist acts.

Shultz noted that the Soviet Union "officially denounces the use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy. Yet there is a wide gap between Soviet words and Soviet actions," he told the conference, which was sponsored by the Jonathan Institute, a private research organization.

"The international links among terrorist groups are now clearly understood, and the Soviet link, direct or indirect, is also clearly understood," Shultz continued. "The Soviets use terrorist groups for their own purposes, and their goal is always the same: to weaken liberal democracy and undermine world stability."

He mentioned Syria, Iran, Libya and North Korea as part of the "League of Terror" that supports "indiscriminate—and not so indiscriminate—murder."

"When Libya and the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] provide arms and training to the communists in Central America, they are aiding Soviet efforts to undermine our security in that vital region," the secretary of state continued.

"When the Soviet Union and its clients provide financial, logistic and training support for terrorists worldwide . . . they hope to shake the West's self-confidence and sap its will to resist aggression and intimidation," he said.

The response, Shultz said, "will have to fit the precise character and circumstances of the specific threats," but must be "within the rule of law, lest we become unwitting accomplices in the terrorist's scheme to undermine civilized society."

The Reagan administration has proposed legislation that would list nations that back ter-

rorists, jail anyone helping the armed forces or intelligence agencies of those countries, and provide rewards to informants on terrorists. Joint international actions could include economic sanctions "and other forms of pressure" on states backing terrorists, but such passive defense is inadequate, Shultz said.

"It is time to think long, hard and seriously about more active means of defense—about defense through appropriate preventive or preemptive actions against terrorist groups before they strike," he said.

Shultz continued that "one of the best deterrents to terrorism is the certainty that swift and sure measures will be taken against those who engage in it." This, he said, will require stronger quick-reaction and intelligence-gathering capacity, particularly human intelligence, or spies.

"Resort to arms in behalf of democracy against repressive regimes or movements is indeed a fight for freedom, since there may be no other way that freedom can be achieved," Shultz said.

Shultz drew a distinction between terrorist groups and "freedom fighters" and said U.S. policy will always oppose the first and support the second. "Freedom fighters don't set out to capture and slaughter schoolchildren; terrorist murderers do The resistance fighters in Afghanistan do not destroy villages or kill the helpless. The contras in Nicaragua do not blow up school buses or hold mass executions of civilians," Shultz said.

He noted that few acts of terrorism have occurred in or against "totalitarian" states, but that last year's 500 terrorist incidents set a record and that 80 percent of them occurred in Western Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

"The epidemic is spreading and the civilized world is still groping for remedies," he said.